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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

DECEMBER 19 1980

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EDUCATION

Schools of thought

By Kenneth Minogue

JOHN PASSMORE:
The Philosophy of Teaching
299pp. Duckworth, £18.
0 7136 1031 7

G. H. BANTOCK:
Dilemmas of the Curriculum
146pp. Martin Robertson, £9.95
(paperback, £3.95).
0 8520 310 2

JOHN ANDERSON:
Education and Inquiry
Edited by D. Z. Phillips
228pp. Blackwell, £12.
0 631 12531 0

"To be frank," writes John Passmore in the preface to *The Philosophy of Teaching*, "I have never been satisfied either by what I have written or by almost anything I have read about teaching." The reason he gives is that most books on education reduce either to strings of commonplace banalities or to self-righteousness. There is thus a kind of desperation in the question which follows: "Why should the teacher have all the best tunes?" Professor Passmore characterizes his position as a middle way between the imaginative and the correct: "Dull, perhaps, like all attempts to find a middle way, but the correct one, often enough, is not very exciting; the best way of being exciting is to go wildly wrong, with massive over-simplification."

This melancholy common sense is, in fact, unfair to what he has called *laetitia*. There are various ways of being exciting about a subject like education, and the writings of John Anderson illustrate one of them. This method consists of incorporating elements of drama and psychology into one's philosophy of education. Another way of being exciting is to ride abstraction as hard as to leave the complexities of the ordinary world behind: for why, he may plausibly be asked, should philosophers bother with such complexities? In fact, Passmore's own treatment is far from dull. *The Philosophy of Teaching* is a very good piece of work, even if it lacks the coherence displayed in some of his earlier books. There is nothing he discusses which he does not illuminate.

Why is it difficult to write a philosophy of teaching? Part of the reason lies in the fact that ours is the most devotedly pedagogic civilization ever to have taken up space on the earth's surface. Even so simple a piece of entertainment as the cowboy film is awash with passages of instruction in such unlikely skills as shoeing a horse or snooking up on buffalo downwind. We are all passionate learners, and hence the project of philosophizing teaching, with its correlate learning, resembles fish trying to understand water.

Another part of the reason lies in the fact that, unlike other civilizations, we have no idea of a *summum bonum*. A civilization that thinks it knows what the good life is need hardly bother to think about education: it consists merely in teaching people how to lead that life. But since most philosophies of education incorporate a project for producing a certain type of human being, they run into immediate opposition from those who wish to produce a different kind of human being altogether. The pluralism of our politics is other words, reappears in our views of education. The result is that much in the philosophy of education consists in polemic directed at a shifting target. Sometimes it is the government, sometimes it is the radical, and at other times religious sectarians or capitalists of industry. As Passmore remarks: "Over the time during which I was composing the book, the character of my principal opponents has changed, was at first arguable against the radical reformers' with their hostility to information, habits, the efficient exercise of capacities. Now the greater danger, as I see it, is once again coming from the apostles of utility, the bureaucrats, the regularizers." The reader may well be puzzled as to the identity of those "regularizers", but is otherwise likely to agree that Passmore is moving with the times.

There is a further problem about teaching which is at the forefront of G. H. Bantock's *Dilemmas of the Curriculum*. It results from the fact that the entire youth of the Western World is subject willingly to a long period of (unintentionally) literary and symbolic instruction. This artificial situation—artificial in the sense that it results from political and social imperatives rather than educational ones—generates most of the dilemmas that preoccupy Professor Bantock. If education is adopted to the whole

of the school population, it will fail to stretch the intelligent. If it concentrates on the exactitudes of grammar and form, then it may crush a mysterious something which is prominent in educational thought as "creativity". If, on the other hand, the teacher tries to let the creativity out of the child he may find himself confronting a great deal of vacuous self-expression. If too many facts are too few result in an idle and unstruck mind. It is little wonder that as the dilemmas multiply, teachers take refuge in either tradition or the current fashion, and the world of teaching begins to resemble *laetitia* in its feverish addiction to being *à la mode*.

Bantock is a sane guide to the problems that arise in secondary education. After a rather breathless and bumpy historical introduction, he sketches out the main problems. The comprehensive product of two contrary impulses—one seeking greater equality of opportunity, the other implying greater equality of outcome. And in dealing with the contradictions thus arising, he is critical of the way in which some educationalists equivocally upon the two senses of the word "culture"—one anthropological and one evaluative. The consequence of this equivocation is the argument that everybody already has in the cultural capital, and hence working-class children are, contrary to the whole point of education, trapped within the narrowness of their own way of life. Bantock has some excellent remarks to make upon the vague for inter-disciplinary with its passion for projects, and upon the criterion of relevance, both of which often have the same misleading effect. The cure of his book, however, is a defence of the view that academically less able children should have a largely different sort of curriculum from that of the more academically inclined child.

The first condition of talking sense about modern schooling is to recognize the sheer strangeness of the modern situation. Bantock quotes Lawrence Stone on the "violent conversion of childhood, physical activity, into a kind of sedentary book learning, often at odds with the familial traditions of the child. The new situation robs

children in punctuality and regularity, but must also lead to a great deal of frustration and unhappiness. A further consequence of the new situation is that all educational practices, including the curriculum itself, are opened up to incessant public debate in which special groups with axes to grind attempt to gain their share of influence over the most desirable of objectives, the mind of the young. In such a situation, Bantock defends himself by tentativeness: "Clearly these suggestions are offered for advice to what has become a major twentieth-century problem—how can we cope with something new in the history of mankind, a total school population?"

It was undoubtedly curious when education was left to the educators, and the whole nation did not expand its dialectical resources agonizing about the effects on the next generation. John Anderson, for all that he died less than twenty years ago, seems like a voice from that past.

Anderson was, from his appointment to the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Sydney in 1927, a local gadfly who set about the unexamined lives of Australians with a Socratic enthusiasm. His horizon was the university itself and he was, as P. H. Partridge remarks, work was in logic and epistemology, his more memorable flights in ethics, but neither of these virtues would have gained him more than local reputation and he not only been able to generate, among his students, a considerable volume of intellectual excitement. It might thus seem that he must be classed among Passmore's "ironies". The question, however, is more complicated than it looks. For one thing, Passmore himself was both a pupil and a colleague of Anderson's. For another, we often think that exciting is the best thing an educator can do. This collection of essays about Anderson, and lecture notes and articles by him, assembled by D. Z. Phillips, reveals some of the reasons why he could inspire excitement, and also suggests some misgivings about this very power itself.

P. H. Partridge supplies the clue to Anderson's power to excite those he taught. He believed that philosophy was not just another specialism, but gave one a necessary key to the understanding of science,

human nature, society and art. In his lectures on Spencer and Dawley, Anderson himself can be found arguing that the educated man is one who is not shackled by the assumptions of his society or group. Such a man sees things objectively, and Anderson goes on to insist that objectivity is not a mere passivity or receptivity. "It requires a criticism of principles if only because all of us have a tendency to fall into more custom and unreflexive living. . . . So our interest in objectivity will also have to work its way through obstacles in ourselves and others."

The great strength of this position lies in recognizing that education is an independent cultural activity which must, when necessary, resist incorporation into whatever schemes governments, churches, commercial firms or political organizations may dream up for it. At the same time, by affirming that objectivity on interest in how things actually work—is the point of education, Anderson is well placed to deal with all types of unexciting relativism which illogically advance doctrines purporting to show how we are the playthings of our culture, class, language, epoch or some other unlikely abstraction. Such relativists, like the sceptics of seventeenth-century France, employ epistemological scepticism in the service of a logic, and it was one of the great benefits of an Anderson education that it made his pupils highly sensitive to any sophistry which operated by attempting to evade questions of truth.

But the clue to the other side of Anderson's excitement can be seen in the talk of being "shackled" by contemporary assumptions, and above all in the far from inadvertent remark that "all of us have a tendency to fall into more custom and unreflexive living", where the crucial point is in the choice of the last two words. Philosophy, that is to say, was concerned not merely with thinking, but with how we live. Anderson was thus not merely an academic philosopher, but also the exponent of a way of life, a kind of guru. He himself would have considered this combination unworkable, and, the way of life he promoted can be summed up in the word "criticism" which was the shibboleth of the Andersonian movement. Those who could not pronounce it rightly were

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In *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* Richard Hulsizer argues that one of the marks of the intellectual is a love of playing with ideas for the sheer fun of it. This activity requires a certain amount of detachment: it can be rather shocking to the serious-minded seeker after truth, who forgets that new truths can often only be reached by dubious routes whose point of departure may be the denial of some belief formerly taken to represent absolute truth. Knowledge has been much advanced by individuals who were deft enough or playful enough to entertain such absurd notions as that the earth is not flat, that the sun does not go round the earth, that there is no absolute framework for space and time, or that parallel lines meet.

Humour often consists of a similar inversion of preconceived ideas. "If the lever orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the

Then Brown he read a paper, and he reconstructed there. From those same bones an animal that was extremely rare. And Jones then asked the Chair for a suspension of the rules. Till he could prove that those same bones was one of his lost mules.

Then Brown he smiled a bitter smile, and said he was at fault. It seemed he had been trespassing on Jones's family vault. He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr Brown. And on several occasions he had cleaned out the town.

Dr John Paulos, a mathematician at Temple University, maintains in *Mathematics and Humour* that there is a close parallel between mathematics (including logic and formal linguistics) and humour. Like some other writers on the subject, some of whom are briefly quoted in the opening chapter, he has difficulty in laying down criteria for what is humorous. He maintains that humour always involves an incongruity, and that it must have a "point" (meaning, gist, nibble). In addition, "the emotional climate must be right": he finds this "difficult to characterise... but... a subdued sort of aggression or self-satisfaction is often present".

He would have done better to delete the word "subdued", which is hardly applicable in Aristophanes or Groucho Marx. "Subdued" would have been a more appropriate epithet since detachment enters into much humour, and satire ceases to be funny if the author is so involved that he wants the objects of his satire annihilated rather than preserved as a subject for mirth.

At the broadest level, mathematics and humour are similar in that they are both forms of play: pure mathematics is well known to be completely useless unless it is applied, when it becomes applied mathematics, which in general is much less fun. Although Dr Paulos does not make the point, an application has ever been found for some forms of mathematics, including aspects of number theory and topology: they are the epitome of the intellectual at play. Moreover, just as the beauty of a mathematical proof depends on its elegance and brevity, so the best jokes must be economical and should avoid redundancy or irrelevant detail. Dr Paulos might have supported this point by citing the shaggy dog story which is the exception that proves the rule—it contains irrelevancies and redundancy precisely because it is a joke about making bad jokes.

As an example of some mathematical reasoning that is so brief, elegant and unexpected that it could justifiably be described as witty, consider the proof of Pythagoras' theorem illustrated in Figure 1. The four small triangles drawn inside each of the large squares have short sides of length a and b and a hypotenuse of length c . The sides of each large square are of length $a + b$. If the area covered by the four triangles is deducted from the large squares, two small squares remain whose total area is $a^2 + b^2$; similarly removing the triangles from the bottom square leaves a square of area c^2 . Since the two large squares are equal and the same area (the four triangles) has been deducted from each, the remaining areas are equal hence: $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.

The techniques of humour and mathematics often resemble one another in more specific ways. The reduction of absurdum is a standard method of proof. For example, to prove that there are infinitely many prime numbers, Euclid supposed that there was a number x which is the highest prime. If this prime number is multiplied by all the preceding primes, the new number N is created; but the number $N + 1$ must be a prime number since it is divisible by all the prime numbers

up to x , and dividing $N + 1$ by any of these primes will leave a remainder of 1. Therefore x , which was defined as the highest prime, is not the highest prime.

Again, the solution to a mathematical problem, like many jokes, often involves an element of trickery—a new way of looking at things. Suppose two trains starting 300 miles apart approach one another, one travelling at 100, the other at 50 miles per hour. A bird flying at 200 miles per hour leaves the first train as it starts, and flies backwards and forwards between the two: how far does it fly before it is crushed between them? If you find this difficult to solve, try working out how long it takes the trains to meet and how far a bird flying at 200 miles an hour would have travelled in that time.

John Paulos goes on to consider the paradoxes of self-reference. The impossibility of deciding whether the Cretan who says "All Cretans are liars" is telling the truth or lying is not only a joke, it points the way to important developments in the theory of logic, including Russell's theory of types and one of the most powerful and interesting results in the subject, namely, Gödel's theorem. There are innumerable jokes based either on

some new disaster. The parallel between iteration in mathematics and in humour, however, seems rather weaker than some of Paulos's other analogies, since the point of a humorous character is not merely that he should do the same thing each time but that he should do the same thing in a different way or in a different situation.

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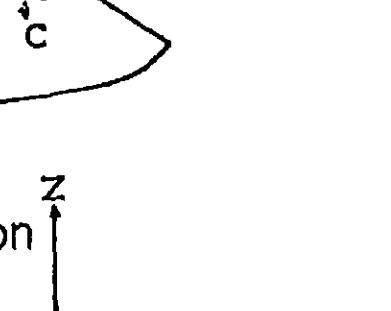


Figure 2

Another point of resemblance between jokes and mathematics is that a set of mathematical axioms may apply to some situations but not others. To simply an example that John Paulos uses, consider the transitive relationship "above": calling this function transitive means that if A is above B and B is above C , then A is above C . It is always true whatever A , B and C are. One might think that "in the right of" was also transitive in all situations; but consider four people seated round a bridge table— A is to the right of B and B is to the right of C . If A is to the right of C , A is opposite C . Many jokes depend on the listener giving the wrong interpretation to a set of informal axioms.

To take one of Paulos's hilarious jokes, an old man says to a young girl, "What goes in hard and dry and comes out soft and wet?" While the young girl is blushing and stammering, the man says "Chewing gum!" The girl—yes, you, gentle reader, unless you are either very sophisticated or very innocent—will have made the same mistake: any set of axioms has more than one interpretation.

Iteration plays a major role in mathematical thinking—if it can be proved that if something is true of a number x it is true of that number plus 1 and also that it is true of the number 1, then it must be true of all subsequent numbers. Similarly, according to John Paulos, iteration is important in certain kinds of humour. P. G. Wodehouse establishes that Bertie Wooster is a good-natured but bumbling character whose stratagems are prone to failure: much of the humour comes from repeating the same point in different ways. The reader wonders how Bertie Wooster will mess up each new situation and has the satisfaction of discovering on each occasion just how his well-intentioned interventions lead to

and uses the word "grue" to mean anything that was green before 1950 but blue thereafter. It can be objected that the usage is arbitrary since it depends on specifying an arbitrary date. But the usage uses these words could be exactly the same objection against the use of "blue" and "green" in English: from their point of view, until January 1, 1950, "green" was "blue" and "blue" was "green" thereafter. According to John Paulos, no resolution of this problem has yet been found.

Perhaps John Paulos's least convincing thesis is that the set of words which the listener ascribes to one or other interpretation. If the listener is at first led to believe more and more confidently an interpretation 1, he may follow the path shown by the dashed line in the diagram. Up to the point p in the sequence of words has pushed the listener towards that interpretation but from that point he is pushed towards interpretation 2, on reaching point b there is a sudden change from interpretation 1 to interpretation 2. A "catastrophe" has occurred, thus is a sudden change in state. This change is represented in the diagram by the sudden drop from point b to point c . Note that, in the region of the catastrophe, which interpretation the listener holds will depend on how he reached a given coordinate on the x and y axes: b and c have the same x and y coordinates but occupy different positions on the z axis.

There are two problems with this interpretation of humour. First, it is impossible to quantify the verbal push towards a given interpretation like variables x and y , and hence no precise shape can be given to the surface representing a jump. Second, although the model fits particular jokes like the one about lady's misinterpretation of the old man's description of chewing gum, there are many other forms of humour in which it appears inapplicable. For example, humour is adequately explained by exaggeration of the qualities of a character in a play or novel.

Most books on humour are unconvincing for their solemnity; one Freud, normally a rather lively and even witty writer, becomes dimly ponderous in *Jokes and their Psychology* and the *Unconscious* and a large part of the jokes he analyses are largely uninteresting. For example, "Humour fits into two halves. In the first half we with the second we would come; and in the second we wish the first one were back." Freud attributes this not to a pun, K. Flecher (1889), presumably had put the whole thing much better. Most of the jokes reproduced in *Mathematics and Humour* can be read without any risk of damage to the lungs, but they at least have the merit of brevity, and the hook of a whole.

Although John Paulos may have failed to capture the nature of jokes, his analogy with mathematics and logic at least illuminates some of the more serious aspects of humour. Moreover, his examples of mathematical reasoning are often ingenious and are always well presented. Most readers may learn more from the book about mathematics than they do about jokes, but that may be no bad thing. John Paulos himself remarks that it is strange that no educated person would admit to being completely ignorant about Shakespeare yet ignorant about the ignorant. Paulos has certainly succeeded in our ordinary language have a pun-facile analogous grammars we are inclined to try to interpret them analogously; [hence] we misunderstand... the grammar of our expressions.

John Paulos ends his section on the humour to be derived from grammatical anomalies with the following puzzle. Suppose a certain race uses the word "bluen" to mean anything that was blue before January 1, 1950 but green thereafter, and uses the word "grue" to mean anything that was green before 1950 but blue thereafter. It can be objected that the usage is arbitrary since it depends on specifying an arbitrary date. But the usage uses these words could be exactly the same objection against the use of "blue" and "green" in English: from their point of view, until January 1, 1950, "green" was "blue" and "blue" was "green" thereafter. According to John Paulos, no resolution of this problem has yet been found.

John Paulos ends his section on the humour to be derived from grammatical anomalies with the following puzzle. Suppose a certain race uses the word "bluen" to mean anything that was blue before January 1, 1950 but green thereafter, and uses the word "grue" to mean anything that was green before 1950 but blue thereafter. It can be objected that the usage is arbitrary since it depends on specifying an arbitrary date. But the usage uses these words could be exactly the same objection against the use of "blue" and "green" in English: from their point of view, until January 1, 1950, "green" was "blue" and "blue" was "green" thereafter. According to John Paulos, no resolution of this problem has yet been found.

The diverting history of John Fuller

Showing how he went at least as far as he intended, and yet not far enough.

By Russell Davies

JOHN FULLER
The Uliatious
144pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.95.
0 436 168 10 3.

John Fuller was a paragon.
This isn't strictly true,
But helps to get one's Arts in gear.
I think it's wise, don't you?

In idle hours, he'd versify;
In idler hours, he'd read.
And, idler yet, he'd make a hat
You hadn't read when he'd.

And with what speed the man could read!
A friend of Fuller's reckons
Such were his powers, a Book of Hours
Would take him only seconds.

He'd learnt the laundry-lists of Pape,
You'd often hear him quote one:
He knew the Odes of Cecil Rhodes!
And Cecil never wrote one!

Oh, hems of Keats, and creeps like Papp
He'd rendered into Norse.
Or Morse. No, Norse. Though Norse's gain
Was Morse's large, of course.

The day I wish to call in mind,
John tumbled out of bed.
(He always tumbled, never stood,
So weighty was his head.)

"I'm Fuller beans," he felt, "today,
And Captain of my soul."
A train-hunt Captain (look 1) was he,
And Landon was his goal.

"Some proofs have I to take to Town,
And proofs must not be true."
How could he know he'd undergo
A Fuller brush with Fate?

As dawn breaks over Oxfordshire,
We find him on the station—
Still wearing his pyjamas and
Engaged in recitation.

"The King sat in Danfermington Town,
Sipping a gin and tonic."
(You must excuse him while he takes
His morning macaronic.)

"My love is like a red, red rose,
Amn, Amn, Amn,
I wondered long as a shroud—
By Jove, I needed that."

For thus it was he hired the lungs,
And stirred the giant kinn;
Particular rhymes consumed the time
Spent waiting for the train.

At length the early train swung in
With many jolts and hoofs.
The tannoy lady hurbled (through
A wind of Opal Fruits):

"The trams approachin' Plupfor Wum...
But John paid little heed.
His mind was blending Camus with
The Athousinn Creed.

Also for John's Life still goes on
While poets chew the cud.
He never saw the open door.
He only felt the thud.

Down-tumbled headlong-hupless-he
(I say, that's rather nice).
Like chestnut-wood-spreading-tree
(I can't quite do it twice.)

Upon the platform's dumpy design
He oppositely lay.
His form was most extremely plate
As Frogs are wont to say.

While John is sure he's premature,
By shuffling off the coil,
The Man Inside the Paper Von
Is heading to his toil.

His hand flings wide the door. He stoops,
He grasps a bundle there;
He heaves: a hundredweight of Buns
Come flying through the air.

Poor John was rising, Amn by him,
From this his second bed.
When wump! This mighty popor weight
Alighted on his head.

"Alighted" isn't quite the verb.
Thought John, while falling backward,
"I fancy Pope would hit upon
Some less benighted hack-word."

He only stopped to take a leak,
Or cough, or suck a Zube.
Till night, when friends would read to him
Along a speaking-tube.

And now (are you still there?) at last
We hold it in our hand:
The product of his labours in
That Horridly-Ever Land.

The best of rhymes, the worst of rhymes,
The classiest of metres...
(How nant if Rights had been Reserved
By Messrs. A. D. Peters!)

In chapters nine the story's told.
It takes some time occurring.
A trait J. F. oxaggerates
By telling what he's doing.

"For if this Chapter feints," he'll say,
"Or futers..." bluh bluh bluh.
I wish he'd just get on with it.
However, there you are.

The target is the dealers' world
Of pictures, prints and frames.
It's tired and bored (but unexplored
By Clive "Verse Epic" James.)

The hero bows the name of Tim,
But not a lat besides.
We could do better with his hum
As onward Fuller glides.

But can he glide! It's a feat
To float the feet so fleetly.
They are, remember, Russian feet,
And must be shod discreetly.

The Pushkin stanza, you'll recall,
Is very far from free:
ABABCCDD
EFFEGG.

Though Fuller makes this number live,
It does no work for him;
The upshot is an exercise
Akin to verbal gym.

Or yogn. It's too ironious,
Puffs, constricts and chokes.
While banding over backwards it
Is hard to utter jokes.

Look for acrostics; quotes of course;
And palindromic names,
Plus multi-media porty scous
(No real advance on James.)

As for the themes (deception, dreams),
They do survive, but battered.
As stories told to euphemists,
It was the life that mattered.

The whole achieves what blurbists call
A "satisfying blend"
Though narratively (just like me)
It rushes at the end.

So, Did John Fall, or Was He Push-
kin? Has he made his case?
The answer, tripping off the tongue,
And falling on its face,

Is "Hm," I think. Or maybe "Ha."
A sly, judicious "Ho!"
Or "What a question, goodness me,
You crafty so-and-so!"

The marol is as hard to draw
As winning bets at Coral's.
For Fuller's done it all himself.
(The book is full of marals.)

But insofar and inasmuch,
And all that sort of fuss,
If some conclusion must be drawn,
It might go roughly thus:

That if you prove unfortunate
And fall down on the job,
And baw to horrid blackmail fram
The pestilential Blob,

By all means give him quantity,
But keep your best for you.
Don't give the bastard quality
When doggerel will do.

(John Fuller, incidentally,
Will sell the rights to Texas.
O would that I could do the same,
Boo hoo. And Merry Xmas.)

The TLS

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for 1981 is now ready

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Ringing the changes

By Hugh Haughton

IAN MCMILLAN:

The Changing Problem

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0 85635 327 2

PETER JAY:

Shifting Frontiers

79pp. Curzon. £2.95.

0 85635 323 X

SUBSTANTIAL MARKER:

Epistles

or Final Pagan Poems

57pp. Martin Brien and O'Keefe. £4.

0 85616 184 0

Neutral titles, like neutral tones,

will hold the field, if the back of

poetry titles is anything in the way

of the frontiers being shifted much

—they are "shifting" (but not in

any particular direction). The

problem does not seem to have

changed much—it is "changing"

not in any particular direction.

The days when things could

be imagined being changed

"nearly" are presumably long

gone. In the grave, meanwhile,

poets still prefer writing "epistles"

to letters.

The title of Ian McMillan's first

collection *The Changing Problem* is

as well as its sound. The author

is a bell-ringer on the side, pretences

to the Oxford Society of Change

Ringers, and devotes several poems

to his hobby, in that we can assume

that his poetry trusts itself in an

enduring analogy between his art

and change-ringing. The poems in

the collection, in their eliding, im-

mediate organization, to these un-

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chaste poems of love, friendship, homage and tribute. "Love is civilized God looking for gentle poems"—this quotation from Proust might have stood as Jay's motto, for he does it represent his high-range witfulness. He is drawn to twilight images, vague memories, lost moments, distant pretexts, absences. His gentle poems are dedicated to evoking "reminiscent" in a style characterized by relentless diminution. His verse thrives with "echoes" not sounds, "shadows" not substances. What sounds there are "murmur" while the earth is "but a play of dead shadows". The same rays are "tentative" while evenings are "filled with deepening" images. "They sound" moments given only "vague" in fugitive moods, and a word is imagined "echoing/ever more faintly far ever".

As things are attenuated, so too are the verbs and adjectives which circulate them. The breeze is a "faint drifting", an image is "rustling" in "drift" away, "linger", and when the poet is imagined hovering he believed it in the form of "whispering echoes" leaves which "tangle" before he "departs". All the ingredients of my daily bread possess me with their absence. "I have" says in one poem—and readers can only concur, while regretting his failure to transcend the daily bread in the poem of absence, that hardly, another poet of absence, so significantly does. One can recognize everywhere Jay's distinction, but feel that his preference for what one might call the "Hellenic Twilight" has diluted the impact of his own poetry and

Spinning through the void

By Edna Longley

THOMAS KINSELLA:

Poems 1956-1973

192pp. Dublin: Dolman Press. £7.50

(14.50 paperback).

0 85105 365 3

Line and Other Poems

71pp. Dolman Press in association

with Oxford University Press. £2.95.

0 85105 341 6

Fifteen Dead

75pp. Dolman Press in association

with Oxford University Press. £2.95.

0 85105 328 9

Thomas Kinsella, John Montague

and Richard Murphy's disparate

three-volume series—

are led to the pack of Irish poets

who emerged during the 1950s. The

concurrent publication of nearly all

Kinsella's poems provides useful

access to the least accessible, in

another sense, of the Irish. The

1950s were a transitional period for

both Irish poetry and Irish poetry.

Reflected in a look, revealing

What, perhaps, I know.

Perhaps inevitably, but I think

unfortunately, the mellancholic

collections have yielded, in the last

twelve years, to dissonant experi-

ment, to long free-verse

sequences that demote the eutone

initial formal influence of Yeats

and Auden may indeed be eutone

Irish poets, like other

a primary, is very conscious that

locate and define a distinctively

Irish poetic tradition. Kinsella's

further complicated it for his eutone

laments. With John Montague, he

shared a "Gaelic Ireland" of the

century's silence.

Such awareness has, on the one

hand, borne fruit in an excellent

translation of *The Tain*, and, on

the other, possibly contributed to

Every Anglo-Irish poet: Eng-

lish, with varying degrees of skill,

his independence of English tradi-

tion—Somus Heaney, for example,

being a splendid example of how to

get the best of both worlds. But

reduced its vitality and human

typical is the way that two poems

Mr Barker likes to begin his

Kinsella's version of UDI, or marked

While under this hygienic ceiling

Such awareness has, on the one

himself—though he often sounds

Mr Barker likes to begin his

Kinsella's version of UDI, or marked

While under this hygienic ceiling

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Such awareness has, on the one

this most exclusive of

Those pre-emptive

Kinsella's version of UDI, or marked

While under this hygienic ceiling

Such awareness has, on the one

Such awareness has, on the one

The Penguin Book of Bird Poetry

Those pre-emptive

Kinsella's version of UDI, or marked

While under this hygienic ceiling

Such awareness has, on the one

Such awareness has, on the one

responsibility for the pleasures to be

Those pre-emptive

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Those pre-emptive

Kinsella's version of UDI, or marked

While under this hygienic ceiling

Such awareness has, on the one

Such awareness has, on the one

Flights of fancy

By Peter J. Conradi

The Penguin Book of Bird Poetry

Edited with an Introduction by

Ricky Munsterberg

Sligo, Allen Lane, £8.95.

0 7139 1334 7

All birds are born poetic, but some

of the 250 bird species that Gilbert

while in the mid-eighteenth century

and only about thirty were used

with any frequency in poetry. Some

of the commonest birds—far

example the chaffinch—have

scarcely been represented in litera-

ture at all. (Nor is the relevant part

of Browning's "Home Thoughts,

from Abroad" which has the chaf-

finch singing on the orchard bough

included here.) It is a relatively

stable avian that has been used over

the centuries as an exclusive club

whose membership is extended only

occasionally, as for example, appro-

priately enough around 1832 when

the representation of birds in the

poetic pantheon, see John Clare's

partial endorsement of the

warblers and others.

The nightingale, poets' bird per

excellence, provides a good example

of how neo-centred the imaginative

appropriation of the bird world

has been. Among English poets who

have hymned her are Chaucer,

Sidney, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats,

Coleridge, Arnold, Swinburne,

Wilde, Eliot. In one of many

variants of the original myth,

Tereus, married to Procne, rapes

her sister Philomela after having

fallen in love with her voice. He

cuts out Procne's tongue to silence

her. The sister, in turn, grieves

and her voice is changed into

birds: Tereus into a hawk or

hoopoe; Philomela, lovely-voiced,

into the nightingale, eternally plaintive

and Procne, tongueless, into the

whispering swallow. According to

Greco-Roman mythology, the

entire cross-section of medieval

and Renaissance bird symbolism

is extended to philosophical

proportions in poem of debate.

In Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*,

a debate about love, we have on

entire cross-section of medieval

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and Renaissance bird symbolism

responsibility for the pleasures to be

Those pre-emptive

The minutiae of patronage

By G. M. Wilson

ALAN KENDALL:
Robert Dudley: Earl of Leicester
260pp. Cassell. £8.95.
0 304 30422 5

In the Armies of the Tower of London is an armour made for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in about 1575. It is styled in imitation of the latest civilian fashions and decorated with Leicester's initials, his personal emblem, the representation of the collar of the French Order of St Michael which he received in 1566. Even in an age considerably less reticent than our own, such an outlandish flamboyant display of individuality was typical of the Dudley family for, as Alan Kendall remarks, "wherever there were Dudleys there was also the Dudley badge, the Bear and Ragged Staff". This emblem not only covered their armour but also their clothes, their books, their utensils, their furniture and furnishings and even their houses.

The Dudleys did not spend large sums of money on such self-advertisement only because they were extremists and posers, although they were. There was a more serious purpose: they were newcomers. Families who had risen in prominence under the Tudor dynasty, to protect and enhance their new status they had both to create and

to promote an image of themselves. They flaunted their new wealth as much to ensure its permanence as to enjoy its novelty. In particular they liked other "new" families, want to great lengths and considerable expense to prove their noble and ancient lineage. They were also a closely-knit family, proud of their common achievements and always happy to advertise each other's successes to the world.

All this is well illustrated in Mr Kendall's new biography of Leicester, which emphasizes the relationship with Queen Elizabeth I. At one time, early in Elizabeth's reign, it was generally believed that she and Dudley would marry, and Kendall quotes Mary Queen of Scots' last remark: "The Queen of England is going to marry her horsekeeper". In this and in the marriage never took place and in retrospect it is hard to believe that it ever could have done. Robert Cecil, writing in 1564, remarks that Dudley's "sole impediment was more than enough to prevent Elizabeth from countenancing a marriage of love. Yet even after she had disappointed him of his greatest hope Elizabeth continued to expect total loyalty from her "lap-dog" and was both very kind and very angry whenever she did not get it.

This is all familiar ground, but Kendall tells the story with considerable skill. However, he does not allow for much genuine feeling

on Leicester's part. He mentions Leicester's vanity, his determination and his relentless ambition, which led him on several occasions to overplay his hand with the Queen, but there is never any suggestion that Dudley's actions might have been dictated, at least in part, not by ambition but by love. With this era of genuine sentimentality, the relationship which Kendall describes appears to be rather out of place.

However, the book is not simply about the relationship between Elizabeth and Leicester. What it is, is a history of the daily routine of his subject and especially the intimate correspondence which he had to deal with. It is a history of the Tudor system of government and patronage. He shows how a courtier like Leicester was letters asking for some form of preferment, and sometimes even release from duties which had become too onerous or distasteful. All these letters, whether from Leicester himself, often in great detail, indeed he seems to have revelled in the minutiae of his trouble over it, and his success as a patron helped him to increase his political and social power.

Despite its faults this is a good and reliable account of the life of one of the great Elizabethans.

Model partnership

By G. E. Mingay

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS:
A Great Estate at Work
The Halkham estate and its inhabitants in the nineteenth century
284pp. Cambridge University Press.
£24.
0 521 22696 1

It is now forty years since historians began to write the history of landed estates, existing as they do in the primary of the great estate, among the biggest business opportunities of the time, that has left the largest mass of evidence, in the form of private and estate correspondence, and maps. Of these great estates Halkham, in Norfolk, is one of the few few so far to have received full-scale treatment in book form.

Five years ago R.A.C. Parker published his study of the celebrated Coke of Norfolk, putting the estate in its historical context. Parker's study of the estate in its historical context. Parker's study of the estate in its historical context.

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number of the bigger tenants, more than one farm, perhaps bringing a son up in the business, through secondary farms were up in depression years. As an estate, Halkham was a success, continuing through the family line. Thirty-one farms were held by the same families for the entire 100 years covered by the book.

Halkham was admired as a progressive estate, particularly in the management of two of the estate's best-known agents, Francis Halkett and W. W. Keary. From 1800 to 1850, Halkham was a success, continuing through the family line. Thirty-one farms were held by the same families for the entire 100 years covered by the book.

Whistler's transformation of an industrial scene has perhaps less to do with the actual scene than with the exercise of his artistic sensibility. But he is not the only foreigner to have fashioned the most famous eighteenth-century views of the city, and George Dore, who made the watercolour record of its nineteenth-century scene, was no exception. Until Sickert's "The Ragged Dicks" in 1902, the city was largely restricted to the purely topographical, industrial, and the Whistlerian fancy narrative of the city.

The building of more and better cottages offered the estate a definite advantage in attracting good tenants to the farms, but even so the anomalous spent very small sums in relation to the revenue. The second Earl's philanthropy was a personal and limited kind, indeed, was spent on church restoration and on almshouses, all provided by the estate, otherwise the schools were supported by only modest voluntary contributions.

Michael Jacobs and Malcolm Warner are convinced it does. With the aid of enthusiasts they have produced a dictionary of places where artists have been born or have lived, painted or had studios. Necessary though it is to read about artistic communities, they are only relevant to the thesis of this book—the relation of artist to place—when that artist actively influenced the art produced. No list

CHAS. JACOBS and MALCOLM WARNER:
The Phaidon Companion to Art and Artists of the British Isles
Phaidon. £12.95.
0 7143 1932 8

Backrupt and in Venice in 1880, Whistler wrote, "I am buried in a certain time away from the world. I pine for Pall Mall and long for a hansom." American and long for a hansom. American and long for a hansom. American and long for a hansom.

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Artists in their landscapes

By Frances Spalding

One's only regret is that the authors did not linger in certain places to go deeper into their landscape. Warner and Jacobs made the bold decision to exclude work of purely topographical significance, arguing that once an artist is free from the restraints of topography he can more openly acknowledge the spiritual element in his response to place. It is of course unfair to expect a dictionary to do what a monograph can do, but the book is a valuable addition to the literature of the subject.

The Hampstead entry, for instance, contains a long and fascinating catalogue of information. Dislike by Blake, Hampstead was one of Constable's favourite areas and he resolutely shared it with Linnell, Mulready and others. Passing down Heath Street and happening on some graves excavating a sewer, Ford Madox Brown had the idea for his masterpiece "Work". In the late nineteenth century several prosperous rural landowners, including the Rev. John Lubbock, moved to the area and built their homes. Will Rotherham settled there in 1902 because the area gave the illusion of the country. Its spiritual atmosphere at weekends attracted both Mark Gertler and Stanley Spencer.

Across differ in the degree of effect they have had on artists. Dorsetshire, attractive to tourists, has never inspired a school of painters. Cornwall, on the other hand, has produced one generation after another since the 1880s. Literature has played a significant part in this mysterious process. Scott's novels influenced appreciation of the South West, while the Reverend William Gifford, writing in the 1820s, produced one generation after another since the 1880s. Literature has played a significant part in this mysterious process. Scott's novels influenced appreciation of the South West, while the Reverend William Gifford, writing in the 1820s, produced one generation after another since the 1880s.

Waterhouse's range of female poses, kneeling in front of a mirror, holding a bowl or golden box to her face; bending down towards the water to discover the head of Orpheus or her own scaly tail. The repetition of contemplative attitudes and the fading of over time. Waterhouse, elected to the Royal Academy at his third attempt in 1895, moved six years later to St John's Wood, that haunt of the artistic establishment. By the time of this move, critics were beginning to complain about the predictability of what the *Magazine of Art* called "his single type of feminine beauty—the lovely face of a sweet girl, fatish, which for Mc Waterhouse's sake, it not for the spectator's should occasionally be varied".

During his most inventive and prolific years, from 1883 to 1903, Waterhouse's work was dominated by the work of artists to Primrose Hill Studios—his neighbours included William Lugg, and Maurice Greiffenhagen. Encouraged by Bramley, he flirted briefly with the plein-air, but the Newlyn School, the work of the Newlyn School, the work of the Newlyn School, the work of the Newlyn School.

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can arouse is well illustrated by Sutherland's discovery of the Pennine landscape in 1924. Like Constable, he admitted "it was in this country that I began to learn painting". He wrote of his fascination with the intricate structure of the landscape, its terrible valleys, winding roads, sudden caves, strange hills and a certain quality of light, but his sense of place seems to have been married to an awareness of the historic moment. He spoke of the emotional feeling of being on the brink of some drama and the landscape possessed "an almost mythical quality". He found no conflict between reality and his imagination, but instead perceived reality as imagination dispersed. Gradually, gnarled rocks gave way to thorn trees; meadow replaced by a dark, wooded landscape. When in 1936 he saw the first World War. Like Haines, Alington Newton is a notable omission in this book. He painted deserted waterways and neglected warehouses, finding in these areas "more of the individual character of London... far more mental atmosphere and a certain sadness made up of human exiles". In recent years this melancholy has resurfaced in Auerbach's paintings of St Pancras steps and Kossoff's series on Kilburn Underground. Meanwhile, against a background of urban sprawl, popular prints, calendars and Christmas cards uphold the myth of rural England.

Landscape itself continues to play a significant part in modern British art. Almost all leading twentieth-century painters and sculptors have either lived or worked in a period with a certain place or have identified the formative influence of their early environment. Hopper, Moore and Armitage have spoken of their debt to the West Riding countryside; Ian Dewart has been associated with the Cotswolds; Cornwell with the Cotswolds; Cornwell with the Cotswolds; Cornwell with the Cotswolds.

In the present century most painters have remained equally detached. Michael Jacobs and Malcolm Warner omit Sir Charles Holman, who, among other points, wrote of art as a "corner of nature seen through a temperament". This hunk of nature seen through a temperament. This hunk of nature seen through a temperament. This hunk of nature seen through a temperament.

Phyllis and Demophilus, Apollo and Daphne, are perhaps the most common of the gods, but the theme of love denied.

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London itself has aroused conflicting responses. At once a place and a symbol of greatness, it has inspired images of nobility as well as paintings that affirm the private and informal, intimate moments which, set within the anonymity of the city, take on added weight.

While Wyndham Lewis praised the city's inhuman scenery, in his Vorticist compositions, Sickert recorded the dereliction of London's lower suburbs and their inhabitants, and more sadness is felt than hope in most images of London painted since the First World War. Like Haines, Alington Newton is a notable omission in this book. He painted deserted waterways and neglected warehouses, finding in these areas "more of the individual character of London... far more mental atmosphere and a certain sadness made up of human exiles". In recent years this melancholy has resurfaced in Auerbach's paintings of St Pancras steps and Kossoff's series on Kilburn Underground. Meanwhile, against a background of urban sprawl, popular prints, calendars and Christmas cards uphold the myth of rural England.

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The cult of St Thomas

By Antonia Gransden

ANNE DUGGAN:
Thomas Becket: A Textual History of his Letters
318pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £17.50.
0 19 822496 9

The second half of the twelfth century marks an important stage in the transition from a society relying predominantly on unwritten forms of administration and record, to one in which the written word was paramount. It is not surprising, therefore, that this was an age of letter collections. Collections of famous men survive from the continent and also from England. That of John of Salisbury was most prominent to provide examples of his friend Thomas Becket, but that of his friend Thomas Becket, but that of his friend Thomas Becket, but that of his friend Thomas Becket.

Mrs Duggan traces the evolution of Becket's correspondence and related documents whose unifying theme is the dispute with Henry II. The collection, which is a copy of Becket's household in his own lifetime, and perhaps under his supervision. Shortly after his murder it amounted to seventy-nine letters, but the archiepiscopal clerk soon added to the collection, until it contained 206 items. Finally, Alan of Tewkesbury, prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, from 1179 to 1186, produced a massive collection of 538 letters and chronologically arranged more or less documents, arranged more or less chronologically, arranged more or less chronologically, arranged more or less chronologically.

The immediate purpose of the collection was to record the acts of a pre-eminent ecclesiastic, but the collection was also a means of preserving Becket's letters to his friends in England informed of the progress of his case, and then after his martyrdom, to rally support for his canonization. For the widespread dissemination of such evidence earlier collections of the correspondence were inadequate. Mrs Duggan has located and describes examples of these.

After Becket's death, at the same time as his correspondence, was being assembled, biographers were at work on his life, stimulated by the same desire to commemorate the

martyr and record his acts. Mrs Duggan has an interesting chapter on the biographies. Edward Grim, William FitzStephen, William of Canterbury, and Geoffrey, all made extensive use of the correspondence. Herbert of Bosham is less dependent on it, since he wrote rather later, after the completion of Alan of Tewkesbury's great collection, he was able to refer the reader to the latter. Nor does the connection between the letters and the history and here John of Salisbury and Alan of Tewkesbury write their lives to praise Tewkesbury's collection, while Grim added no appendix of letters.

The culmination of these hitherto separate efforts of Grim and FitzStephen, completed at the end of the twelfth century, is the earliest of a scholarly compilation of the evidence provided by Becket's correspondence and can claim, Mrs Duggan asserts, "to be one of the best accounts of the Becket drama in English literature". Both the later collections of the twelfth century and the middle Ages. Lives have been associated with modern historiography. They show a respect amounting almost to achieve a fair degree of objectivity. Their purpose was to provide a just

Early promise

By Christopher Lloyd

TOM COCKE:
The Young Nelson in the Americas
241pp. Collins. £7.95.
0 00 216562 7

No other biographer of Nelson has been able to claim, as Tom Cocke does, that he has visited all the important places in his subject's life. He has not yet hunted for Nelson's footprints in the Arctic, but in this book he ranges from Quebec (where Nelson lost his heart and his head) south to New Orleans, where he died, and then to the West Indies, where he was buried. Cocke's book is a masterpiece of research and writing, and it is a pleasure to read it.

At that time the Caribbean was the Grand Theatre of Action, and the young Nelson naturally found it a fitting stage for his early career. He was not only a brilliant officer, but also a brave and daring one. He was not only a brilliant officer, but also a brave and daring one. He was not only a brilliant officer, but also a brave and daring one.

account of the controversy, reflecting both sides of the case. There is a need of special pleading on Becket's behalf. By special pleading, no one needed to his cause, but he had been married, and he had been married, and he had been married.

made by the Governor of Jamaica and the story of what took place forms the core of this book. It is the fullest account yet provided of the author having followed Nelson's tracks by canoe and light

Nelson was unlucky in all his adventures ashore and there was little likelihood of his surviving a second voyage to the Americas. It is astonishing to learn that generations how casually the naval titles at home despatched troops to war, and lost nearly all of them. In this case, the 1,500 soldiers who were sent up to the uncharted ever heard of were to be sent to Jamaica by a sloop converted of a captured enemy twenty-one. Of the mouth of the river, he reached the mouth of the river, he reached the mouth of the river.

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In certain respects the story is a familiar one: a rural which rose substantially with the rise in land values through the century to reach £50,000 in 1882, only to fall back with the depression to under £32,000 by 1909; a widening of investments, which after 1871 came to include Indian, Canadian and American railways, as well as British ones, together with railways, Australian land mortgages and such other land investments as the Lynton and Devonshire Railway and the London and North Western Railway.

In other ways Halkham was untypical. Much the largest estate in Norfolk, in 1851 it comprised 42,000 acres divided into only seven farms, some of which were exceptionally large by the standards of most estates: six extended to more than 1,000 acres, and one twenty-five were more than 500 acres. Some of the tenants were farmers of national repute, living in style, and some of them were supplied with servants and carriages, and such other luxuries as the riding horses, as well as the farm horses. A

Medical expedition has unusual narrative was Dr Mosely, who chiefly stayed behind. Nelson was ill, suffering from bouts of malaria and cholera. In this was now a young man now to the tropics. Mosely, of course, never contracted the scourge with mosquitoes; what old remedy of Peruvian bark. No home looking, Nelson was invalided, his place was taken by his new friend, Col. Despard. Only ten of the original ship's company of 200 survived.

The other friend made on this expedition was Colonel Despard, who emerged as the most interesting character. In the end, Nelson shared a boat with him and efficiency as a high regard for his officer. After the war both men were unemployed. Nelson soon found a commission in the army, but Despard, an Irishman, was not so lucky. He was not so lucky. He was not so lucky.

Weapons and Equipment of the Marlborough Wars by Anthony Kemp (172pp. Blandford Press. 95p. 0 7103 017 6) is a fully illustrated account of the material which was used in the period of the Marlborough Wars, and covers as well as "Infantry", "Cavalry", and "Artillery", such essentials of campaigns as clothing, transport and other details.

There is indeed much in the area of social relations in this book that is interesting, but in the end the most valuable contribution is perhaps the light it throws on the working of the landowner-tenant relationship, the partnership which helped to make nineteenth-century English farming a model for the world.

Anthony Hobson, who organized the exhibition devoted entirely to Waterhouse, proves, in his beautifully produced study and catalogue raisonné, that the Victorian Academicism was far more than the tedious, unimaginative, and unimaginative, unimaginative, unimaginative.

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Post-pre-Raphaelite

By Kate Flint

ANTHONY HOBSON:
The Art and Life of J. W. Waterhouse
1849-1917
280pp. 393 illustrations. Studio Vista
£22.50 to 31 December, 1980.
0 284 70919 9

For too long, J. W. Waterhouse has been known by only a handful of names. The pre-Raphaelite poster nymphs too close from the water nymphs too close from the water nymphs too close from the water.

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Academy schools as a sculptor — an apparently pragmatic play in gale omission, since afterwards he worked almost solely in paint. The figures came to life in his earliest, approved, evident in his earliest exhibited canvases. Fluted pillars, monolithic cornices and Islamic grilles—betraying the eastern influence of his sponsor and mentor, F. R. Pickersill—are all prominent in the light architectural "Marlborough" style of the "Orator" (1882). "The Favourites of the Emperor Honorius" (1883, mytically dated in a uniquely inaccurate caption as 1829-1917) and "Marlborough" (1887).

Unfortunately, the name most frequently mentioned by contemporary commentators in relation to these works was not Pickersill but Alma Tadema, echoed continually in the creamy marble steps and pavements, the inland mosaics and the receding interior perspectives. Like Alma Tadema, Waterhouse exuded a sense of the grandeur of the past, which he viewed his patronage in the light of the Victorian Academicism was far more than the tedious, unimaginative, and unimaginative, unimaginative, unimaginative.

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